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# homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE

FRIDAY, December 12, 1941

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SUBJECT: "HOME AND COMMUNITY MEAT CANNING." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

These December days are certainly busy ones--especially if you're a farm homemaker. For in addition to the regular pre-Christmas rush--it's the time for slaughtering meat at home--in many parts of the country anyway. In fact, some farm homemakers like to plan their meat slaughtering as near Christmas time as possible so there's a quarter of fresh meat for the holiday meals.

But whenever you do your home meat slaughtering--now or later on--I have some notes today that may interest you. These notes concern home meat canning. And they came to me from the canning specialists in the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Of course, meat canning this year is going to be affected a little by the national defense situation. So you may have to make some adjustments. But let me quote directly from the canning specialists on this point. They say--

"This year, as a result of the Food-for-Freedom campaign launched by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, home meat canning takes on added importance. For the Food-for-Freedom program emphasizes the value of more nutritious foods grown and preserved at home as a means of improving diets.

"Also as a result of this Food-for-Freedom campaign more meat canning may be done on a community basis this year than ever before. As you know, in the past canning centers for a community have been used to great advantage for putting up home-grown meats and vegetables--both for families and for schools serving lunches.

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"This year, community canning centers may be more useful than ever. For they help to make the best use of equipment on hand. And this year, canning equipment is limited in some respects as a result of the defense program."

And speaking of canning equipment--here are some special tips from the home economists on conserving canners--containers--and jar tops.

First of all you know--meat cannot be canned safely unless there is a steam pressure canner available in good condition. For only with steam under pressure is it possible to get the temperatures of 240 to 250 degrees Fahrenheit you need to kill the spoilage organisms in meat in a reasonable length of time.

Up until recently the material most used in making steam pressure canners has been aluminum. That as you know, is now a vital defense material. Therefore any homemaker who owns an aluminum canner will be wise if she takes good care of it. Other canners are available in enamelled steel and tinned steel.

No matter what the canner is made of--it should be washed after each use and stored where it won't be dented or surfaces roughened. Keep the safety valve in good working order. Never let the pressure gage get under water. A good way to keep the opening to the pressure gage clean is to use a toothpick.

Another point--be sure to check the pressure gage occasionally to see whether or not it is registering correctly. That pressure gage is the only way you have of knowing what's going on inside the canner. If it is out of order you may not be getting the temperatures you think you're getting. Needless to say, you have to be pretty accurate about temperatures or you're likely to have a lot of spoiled food on your hands. Your home demonstration agent will be able to give you information on checking pressure canner gages.

In some neighborhoods several families band together to buy a canner--then plan their canning so all may use it. The community canning center that I spoke of before carries this cooperative scheme still further. For it makes comparatively few canners serve many families.





Another important defense material used for canning is zinc. Zinc is used for certain types of tops for glass jars. Take special care of these zinc tops. As long as they are not dented on the edges--and not misshapen and the porcelain lining isn't broken--you can use them time and time again. So when you open jars with this type of lid--never pry it open with a knife blade or other metal instrument. That dents the edge and ruins the top for future use.

A good way to open a jar with the screw-top lid is to pull the rubber out first--either with your fingers or with a pair of pliers. If it's hard to do it this way--set the jar up-side-down in a pan with enough warm water in it to come up above the cap. In a few minutes the rubber ring will become softer and you can remove it more easily.

Another way to conserve containers and equipment is to can meat by itself. That is much more economical of space than canning meat in combination with other products that you can add just as easily when you take the meat out to use it.

And here's a final tip--and a word of warning--about how not to conserve canning equipment. Says the Bureau of Home Economics--

"Some homemakers believe they are conserving jar tops when they use half-gallon jars for meat canning. In that way they reason one top covers twice the meat it would in a quart jar."

But here's the fallacy in that--

Home economists say that it is dangerous practice to can meat at home in containers larger than a quart glass jar or a number 3 tin can. The reason is that in a larger jar or can of meat, heat penetrates so slowly that much longer processing periods are necessary--so long they are impractical for home canning. If the heat does not penetrate so that all the meat is sterilized, spoilage results and the meat is wasted.

If you'd like a handbook of procedure for home meat canning, you can get directions for "Home Canning of Fruits, Vegetables, and Meats," Farmers' Bulletin 1762 by writing to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

